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affecting subjects, and images, to which He frequently has recourse; from the surprizing inequality, which, in his different productions, is very sensibly felt by every unprejudiced, and true critick; and from the labour with which most of his Poems are stiffly characterized;—from these principles I likewise conclude, that there was a langour, and effeminacy in his mental frame; that his Muse was often deaf to his invocation; that the current of his fancy was often weakened, contracted, and obstructed, by some constitutional poverty, and frost; and that his best compositions were the effects of a temporary, but fortunate sunshine, and warmth of soul, producing as happy a sympathy with those objects which were most correspondent with his mind; more than of an essential, and permanent brightness, and ardour of genius. This observation will neither seem invidious, nor imaginary to Those who reflect that the human mind, is, in different persons, complicated, and diversified to an infinite variety; and that greater poets than Mr. Gray have their conspicuous master-pieces; though they may not outshine their other works with so preeminent a lustre as the famous Elegy, written in a Country-church-yard, excells other Poems of the same Authour."

It will be noted that Stockdale anticipates in a striking manner subsequent explanations <sup>1</sup> of the poet's slender production.

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"DITAMY," *Endymion*, I, 555

The spelling, "ditamy," has puzzled the editors of Keats. Buxton Forman, in his footnote on this passage writes:

"In the manuscript and in the first edition we read *ditamy*. I have not succeeded in finding the orthography elsewhere; but I see no reason for doubting that Keats met with it somewhere and preferred it to *dittany*. In Philemon Holland's Pliny, where it might have been expected to occur, I can find no more English equivalent for *dictamnus* than *dictamne*; but it is worth noting that three modern languages drop the *n* and not the *m*—thus Italian *dittamo*, Spanish *dictamo*, and French *dictame*; and in a time when spelling was more or less optional some classical English writer may well have done the same." The N. E. D., however, does not list Keats' spelling, although it does give *dittamy* as a seventeenth century form. And no other editor, so far as I have been able to ascertain, has improved on Forman's suggestion.

<sup>1</sup>For a convenient summary of these explanations, see Professor C. S. Northup's edition of Gray's *Essays and Criticisms*, 1911, Introd. pp. xxii-xxvii.

Keats' source was Lempriere's *Classical Dictionary*, an obvious place to look, it would seem. All the editions (save one) of that oft-reprinted book that I have consulted contain in the article on Diana the sentence: "Among plants the poppy and the ditamy [sic] were sacred to her." Since Diana was the author of *Endymion's* sleep, and since the poppy is conventionally somniferous, the machinery of the magic growth naturally suggested itself to Keats, who, from love of strange words, coupled with the poppy the less familiar "ditamy" afforded by his source.

It may be remarked that we have here a clear indication that Keats did use Lempriere while writing his poems. I have noticed a few other, less striking, indications of this use in *Endymion* and in *Hyperion*.

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#### WOLSEY AND BLONDEL DE NESLE

According to Wolsey's biographer Cavendish, that extraordinarily successful politician actually uttered before his retirement a complaint whose substance is reproduced in the passage from *Henry VIII*:

Had I but served my God with half the zeal  
I served my king, He would not in mine age  
Have left me naked to mine enemies.

If Wolsey ever did say anything of the sort it must have been for the benefit of his audience, for there is no record of his having ever served anyone but Wolsey. But in any case, Wolsey, Shakespeare or Fletcher seems here to be indulging in literary reminiscence. In the twelfth century the Picard poet Blondel de Nesle had sung (See Mätzner, *Altfranzösische Lieder*, p. 51):

Se je deu tant amasse  
com je fais celi  
ki si me poene et lasse,  
j'ëusse merci.

I submitted the passage to Mr. Horace Howard Furness, Jr., who is continuing the *Variorum Shakespeare*, and he commented thus on the citation:

"There have been pointed out several parallels to the passage in *Henry VIII*, Act III, sc. ii, to which you refer. You may see them by reference to the *Variorum* of 1821 (Boswell's Malone) vol. XIX, pp. 433 and 434, but as far as I know that quoted by you is the earliest . . . in any event Shakespeare's withers are unwrung, for it is now generally conceded that this portion of the scene is by Fletcher."

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